

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T PARIS 2930

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR

SUBJECT: GROMYKO VISIT TO PARIS

REF: (A) PARIS 2258

(B) PARIS 1481

1. SUMMARY. WE NOW HAVE CONFIRMATION THAT GROMYKO IS PLANNING TO COME TO PARIS ABOUT FEB 15. WE ARE TOLD PURPOSE OF HIS TRIP IS TO GO OVER TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AT POMPIDOU-BREZHNEV SUMMIT TO BE SURE THAT POMPIDOU DOESN'T RAISE ISSUES WHICH BREZHNEV SUMMIT WOULD FIND OBJECTIONABLE, AND ALSO TO NEGOTIATE NEW MECHANISM FOR FRENCH-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. FRG EMBASSY COUNSELOR TELLS US THAT HIGH-LEVEL QUAI OFFICIAL HAS CONFIRMED TO THE THAT SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO IS INDEED COMING TO PARIS IN FEBRUARY. FRG COUNSELOR HAS ASKED US TO HOLD THIS INFORMATION IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE. SAME HIGH-LEVEL QUAI OFFICIAL TOLD FRG EMBASSY THAT GROMYKO TRIP SHOULD NOT EVEN BE DISCUSSED AT DEPUTY DIRECTOR LEVEL IN QUAI.

3. MEANWHILE, FRG JOURNALIST WHO HAS BEEN EXCELLENT SOURCE OF RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST TELLS US
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THAT HE FERRETED OUT CONFIRMATION FROM SOVIET EMBASSY PRESS ATTACHE THAT GROMYKO WOULD ARRIVE IN PARIS ABOUT FEB 15 (REFTEL A). ACCORDING TO SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE TRIP OCCASIONED BY STRAINS IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS

AND SPECIFIC PURPOSE IS TO GO OVER SUMMIT AGENDA AND MAKE SURE THAT POMPIDOU DOES NOT RAISE FOLLOWING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES WITH BREZHNEV: A) ALLEGED US-SOVIET CONDOMINIUM; B) LACK OF SOVIET CONSULTATION, ESPECIALLY ON MIDDLE EAST. TO FORESTALL LATTER, SOVIETS PREPARED TO PROPOSE NEW "MORE CONCRETE" MECHANISM FOR FRENCH-SOVIET CONSULTATION WHICH WOULD BE NEGOTIATED BY GROMYKO AND SIGNED AT THE SUMMIT. ACCORDING TO SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE, GROMYKO MIGHT ALSO GET INTO EUROPEAN DEFENSE MATTERS AND CSCE WHILE IN PARIS, IN PREPARATION FOR SUMMIT.

4. FRG CORRESPONDENT SAID SOVIET PRESS ATTACHE TOLD HIM POMPIDOU-BREZHNEV SUMMIT WOULD BE HELD IN SOVIET GEORGIA AND THE CAUCASUS. WE HAVE IT FROM SEPARATE SOVIET EMBASSY SOURCE THAT FRENCH WERE INSISTING ON VENUE IN WARM CLIMATE, SO THAT POMPIDOU WOULD NOT BE SUBJECTED TO RIGORS OF RUSSIAN WINTER.

5. FRG CORRESPONDENT WAS STRUCK BY EXCESSIVE SECRECY SURROUNDING GROMYKO VISIT, WHICH HE SAID WAS TIGHTEST HE HAS KNOWN HERE. HE BELIEVES FRENCH KEEPING THE LID ON SO AS TO DISCOURAGE SPECULATION ON MALAISE IN FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS AND WHICH COULD CAST SHADOW OVER BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU MEETING. HE BELIEVES FRENCH INTENT EVENTUALLY TO ANNOUNCE GROMYKO AND POMPIDOU TRIPS AS A PACKAGE TO MITIGATE THIS POSSIBILITY.

6. FIRST PUBLIC MENTION OF POSSIBLE GROMYKO VISIT APPEARED THIS MORNING (FEB 1) IN LEFT-LEANING NEWSPAPER COMBAT. ARTICLE SPECULATED THAT "IF" GROMYKO COMES TO PARIS SOON TO PREPARE THE BREZHNEV-POMPIDOU SUMMIT, HE WOULD PROBABLY TAKE UP WITH THE FRENCH TOPIC OF EUROPEAN DEFENSE COOPERATION.

7. COMMENT. ALL THIS SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT IT IS MOSCOW THAT HAS BEEN HOLDING BACK ON FIRING UP THE POMPIDOU-BREZHNEV TALKS, AND SUGGESTS THAT THE IMPASSE
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WAS FINALLY RESOLVED BY DECIDING TO SEND GROMYKO TO PARIS TO SEEK FRENCH ASSURANCES AS A PRECONDITION TO THE FRENCH-SOVIET SUMMIT. SPECIFIC FRENCH DESIRES ON CONSULTATIONS WERE CONVEYED TO SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER KOVALEV DURING HIS JANUARY VISIT (REFTEL B) AND PRESUMABLY WILL SERVE AS THE BASIS FOR A SOVIET PROPOSAL WHICH CAN BE NEGOTIATED BY GROMYKO AND SIGNED AT THE SUMMIT. PRESUMABLY THIS WOULD BE SOME SORT OF ELABORATION OF THE OCT 13, 1970 FRENCH-SOVIET PROTOCOL. WE WOULD ALSO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE FRENCH MAY BE THINKING OF SEEKING A SOVIET OBLIGATION TO CONSULT BILATERALLY IF CONDITIONS SPECIFIED IN ARTICLE IV OF THE US-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR

SHOULD ARISE. WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO EVIDENCE FOR THIS
LATTER POSSIBILITY, BUT WE PASS IT ALONG AS CONCEIVABLE,
GIVEN THE SOVIET POSITION WELCOMING ADHERENCE OF THIRD
PARTIES TO THE US-SOVIET JUNE 22 AGREEMENT, FRENCH PIQUE
OVER ITS SIGNATURE AND THE EXTREME SECRECY WITH WHICH
THE FRENCH HAVE SURROUNDED THE GROMYKO VISIT.
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